

**TESTIMONY OF
SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 19, 2020**

HB 5044, AN ACT CONCERNING IMMUNIZATIONS

SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 5044, AN ACT CONCERNING IMMUNIZATIONS**. **SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL** supports this bill.

SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL strives to improve the health of residents in our communities- whether it is partnering with community-based organizations to address social determinants of health, treating a loved one at 2:00 a.m. in the Emergency Department, or employing science-based best practices for infectious disease control.

Spanning the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, vaccines are one of modern medicine's success stories. Immunizations have been embraced across the globe as a prevention strategy for illness, with more than 116 million children worldwide in 2018 immunized against illnesses like diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus. Because of immunization efforts, the world is close to being polio free, with the U.S. being declared polio-free since 1979.

On a regular basis, scientists develop vaccines. Healthcare providers immunize millions of children, adults, and elderly every year to address various emerging diseases, like the annual variation in the strains of influenza. Currently, scientists around the world are working to develop a vaccine for the 2019 novel Coronavirus (2019 Covid-19), a deadly infectious disease currently declared a global health pandemic, which has claimed in excess of 1,000 lives, exceeding the death toll from the SARS outbreak 17 years ago. Without vaccines and robust immunization programs, health impairment and premature death would be the norm.

The science behind the development of vaccines and the practice of immunization are proven to save and improve the lives of countless citizens around the world, in the U.S. and in the state of Connecticut. Hospitals are committed to providing care that is based on best clinical practices that yield the very best outcome.

For these reasons, **SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL** Supports HB 5044.